

W. J. Smith




GLEN ALDYN PLAYS.


THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING.




**HOMMY BEG AND THE
GUILLYN VEGGEY.**



**HOLLANTIDE or
JEM'S MOTHER.**




By CUSHAG.



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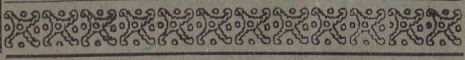
THE MANX SOCIETY
1916




In aid of Lezayre Red Cross Funds.

DOUGLAS:

S. K. Broadbent & Co. Ltd.
Printers.



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The Christmas Pudding

SCENE.—A poor, bare room in a lonely cottage. A round table; a shelf or dresser, with basins and platters; a couple of crocks and two or three stools or benches. Grandmother by fire knitting. Mother comes in, wiping her arms, taking off coarse apron, letting down skirt, etc.

Gr.: Them childher should be home, surely.

M.: They're home this while, but I sent them to the cow-house to see could they find an egg. The lil brown hen is doin' well this coul weather, and an egg at her nearly every day.

Gr.: You'll be making some surt of Christmas Pudding for Jim and Maggie?

M.: Well, I don't know, indeed, what am I goin' to make it of! The flour is near done [looks into crock], an' there's barely a scrape of sugar for your tea. Scandalous the price they're askin' for it these days—an' scarce adhrup of milk from the cow this fortnight. Still an' for all we mus' do what we can for them.

Sets a panmug on the table and looks into odd jars and screws of paper. Children come running in.

Ch.: There's not an egg in, Mammie, an' no sign of the lil brown hen, either.

M. [with spoon uplifted]: Go along with your capers. She'll be in among the others.

Jim: She's not, though, for Maggie got in the hen-house to see.

M.: An' jus' look at the state Maggie is in! [Pulling off dirty pinafore and rubbing her down.] Fit to frighten the rooks, she is. Go your ways now an' get washed or you'll not get no pudding to-morrow.

Children rummage in corner, whispering, and produce a couple of stockings.

Jim: What's goin' in them this time, Mammie? I would like a hatchet. Maggie here wants a doll.

M.: If you want a hatchet you'll have to go to Laxa Broogh an' get the wan the Duinney-oie is leavin' in the moonlight. An' as for a doll, Maggie here is too busy learning to knit for the soldiers to care for a doll. Arn't you chile veen?

Maggie [wistfully]: I would like a dollie though. See, Mammie, this stocking would hold a good big wan, an' the legs could be comin' out of the holes to make room.

Gr. [feeling in her pocket]: The sowles! See then, here's something from Granny [gives them each a halfpenny]. Don't go wasting it on trash now. Think of them poor lil wans over in Belgium that havn't got no stockings to hang up.

M.: An' not no chimleys at them either for Father Christmas to come down.

Jim: If you'll put a nice lil hatchet in my stocking, Mammie, I'll give the lil Belgiums my halfpenny.

M.: Are you goin' to do as I toul you? Go on now an' get washed or I'll warm you. [Exit children to back-kitchen, pumping and splashing.] Deed if this war goes on there'll not be dhry bread in for poor people, let alone puddings an' hatchets.

Gr.: The chile an' his hatchet! Well there's them over beyond that's worse off nor us. We've got a roof over our heads an' plenty bons in. Think of them wans thramp, thrampin' through the mud an' dark from their burning houses, an' the childher cryin', it's like—why, arn't we goin' home, Mammie?—an'—We want to go to bed now, Mammie—an' never a home or a bed lef' them.

[Children return clean and shiny]: What will the pudding be like, Mammie?

M.: The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as the man said, so I'll tell you to-morrow what will it be like. Fetch me a jug of wather, Jim.

Jim goes to crock and fills jug.

Jim: There's plenty of wather, anyway—if it wont be froze.

M.: I can't make a pudding of wather either, an' the flour near done at us an' all.

Jim: Shove a tas' of Indian meal in, Mammie. That's what they call Johnny Oake to in the States; we were readin' about it in school.

M.: I'm thinkin' it's a tas' of the Doctor you'll be wantin' next day; but maybe it will help too. [Goes to crock.] See can you find some raisins in the drawer, Maggie. There were a few in a lil bag if they havn't been took at you an' Jim.

Maggie [rummaging, finds bag and counts out]: Wan—two—three—four—five!

M.: That'll do fine. One for each of us an' wan over. My word, I hope we'll not be proud!

Maggie [still rummaging]: An' what's this at all? Curran's too. There's near a teacup-full. An' there's some dhry crusses in too.

M.: Give them here an' I'll spill a dhrop of wather from the kettle on them to soften them.

Mixes all in panmug.

Gr.: We mus' all put a stir to it so we'll get luck if we don't get pudding.

All stir in turn.

M.: Easy, easy Jim; she'll be all stirred away. [Exit Jim, whistling.] Well she's comin' to, but she'll be wantin' sugar bad. Praps there's a tas' of thraycle lef'. Find a cloth, Maggie. [Maggie brings tablecloth.] Tut, tut, that's too big. There's only a lil tas' all roun', an' you mus' be takin' a good sup of porridge in the morning that you wont be too hungry for your dinners.

Jim [coming in with can]: I can't hardly get no milk from the cow, Mammie—an' there's some quare thing in the haggart, too. I don't like goin' out.

M.: What quare thing is there on you? It's jus' the snow an' the light of the stars is makin' things through others.

Jim: It's makin' a quare surt of noise, too.

M.: What like is the noise?

Jim: I don't know is it cryin' or sobbin' or weenin' some way it is.

Gr.: Praps some wan's dog has got hurted.

M.: I'd bes' go an' see anyway. Here, Maggie, you come with me and houl the lantern—you're not afeard like Jim.

Jim [angrily]: I'm not feared, an' I'm th'oul'es'. Maggie can mind the pudding.

M.: Of all quare things. Jus' look at this?

Sets down little girl-child, dressed like a foreigner. Child puts finger in mouth and stares at them.

Gr.: Aw, the bogh miles! Where in the world have she come from at all. Come to the fire, poor lamb. See how coul the lil hannies is. [All press round, taking off shoes, chafing hands, caressing child's hair, etc.] See the fine doll you've got now, Maggie veen. Reach the milk here, Jim.

Child drinks from basin.

Jim: Oh, Mammie, she's drunk all our milk.

M.: Don't you be passin' such rude remarks, Jim. I think you childher is growin' more imperent an' more ignoranter every day.

Jim [sulkily]: I wasn't sayin' nawthin'.

M.: Don't you go for to give me no sauce now. I'm goin' to fetch a rope's end to you to teach you manners.

Makes as if to go to back-kitchen.

Jim [crying]: Get a sof' wan, Mammie.

M.: Well you mind now an' be good. [Smooths his hair. Jim sniffs and recovers.] I heard there were some of them Belgiums had took a house up the glen. The chile mus' have strayed down here and lost herself. She was lyin' by the big fir logs out theer sobbin' mos' pirrifful, an' the snow fallin' on her too. It's snowin' bad now.

Gr.: An' they'll be in a worl' of throuble up theer when they miss her. How can we let them know at all?

M.: They'll surely be searching everywhere, but with the snow they'll be hindered shocking. We mus' keep her to-night anyway, an' we'll have the pudding for her supper that she'll get warmth in her—

Maggie: Oh, Mammie, that's the for the five raisins was in.

M.: Aye, sure! There's plenty in, an' plenty welcome too.

CURTAIN.—Tableau. The three children on bench with plates of pudding. Grandmother and mother standing with basin and spoon.

Gr.: The scraerpins is good though!



Hommy Beg and the Guillyn beggery.

Room in farmhouse, littered with breakfast dishes, etc. Cradle in centre. One or two stools or chairs. Dresser. Chiollagh, with tongs, etc. Mrs Gale on low chair rocking the cradle.

Mrs Gale [sings]:

Snieu, wheeYL, snieu;
'Rane, wheeYL, 'rane,
Snieu dy-rea er-my-skyn
Dagh bangan as banglane.
Yiow yn Ree yn ollan bane
As yiow-mayd hene y snaie;
Roish lhie-ny-greiney bee eh jeant ain
As eisht ersooyl dy lhie.

Child in cradle [crying]: Yiow-ow-ow-ow!

Mrs Gale: Well, well, the boghey-beg.
[Pats and rocks.] There, there then,
go to sleep an' Mammy wont leave thee.
[Sings.]

Snieu, wheeYL, snieu,
'Rane, wheeYL, 'rane,
Hushie, hushie, bowie,
Hushie, bowie, bow.

I believe he is goin' off and I'll get a chance to tidy up a bit before Hommy comes. [Moves away on tiptoe. Child yells.] Well, well. [Coming back and rocking.] Hush thee; Hush thee; Hushie bowie bow.

Rocks a few seconds, and then tries to slip away again; lifts a cup or two to the dresser. Child yells. Rushes back and rocks vigorously. Child throws blankets off. Mrs Gale puts them back, and pats and rocks, singing, "Snieu, wheeYL," etc. Enter Hommy.

Hommy: Good morning, Mrs Gale. The Masther was tellin' me to call roun' for that you had some stitches wantin' doin'.

Mrs Gale: Yes, sure. Work enough in this house an' no chance for me to be puttin' a run of fixin' on anything. Will you take a dhrink of tea before you begin? The place is all through others, an' indeed I'm not able to side things at all, I am so hobbled with this chile.

Hommy: Aw, indade! He's grew 'stro'nary though, since last I saw him. No, I'll not take anything just now, thank you kindly. Maybe a sup just now when I'll be dhry pullin' the needle in an' out. Is it tejus like this he is all the time?

Mrs Gale: Aw, tejus scandalous. My word, there's no res at us night or day. Himself walkin' the flure with him all night. I don't know what's doin' on him.

Hommy [looking down wisely through his spectacles at cradle]: He's lookin' middlin' wickad too. [Child yells.]

Mrs Gale [angrily]: Don't be sayin' such things an' him in pain, perhaps, poor lil sow! There's something must be hurtin' him to make him so cross. An' not able to put a foot to the ground yet.

Hommy: Aw, indade! They're sayin' it's very backward he is.

Mrs Gale: He is that—but he's cuttin' his teeth fine, for all. He took an' bit his Daa yesterday in a mistake. Deed but he can bite well enough.

Hommy: Aw, indade! An' is it only now he is cuttin' his teeth, an' him very near four years of age. He should be walkin' by now.

Mrs Gale: An' how is he goin' to be walkin' an' him so wake that his legs is no more use to him till a piece of tangle! It's like cuttin' the teeth is enough for him at a time.

Hommy: An' not spakin' yet either, they're sayin'.

Mrs Gale: Not a word out of him yet. 'Deed, though, there's many that's doin' more talk than work.

Rocks again, and sings,

Hommy: It's my belief it's wickad he is, an' if you were to take an'—

Mrs Gale: Wickad, indeed, Hommy Beg! You were wickad, too, when you were a chile, from all that's sayin', an' your mother pullin' twigs from the hedges to be lar'shin' you with. [To Child] There, there then, was Hommy bad to the poor lil falla? What's doin' on him then!

Hommy: Well I'd better be lookin' for the mendin'. Them coats an' things, is it? [Goes to pile of things and begins looking them over. With coat or waistcoat held out, he stops and looks wisely at Mrs Gale over his glasses.] Well, he's what you might call a species of coorosity, anyway.

Mrs Gale [furiously]: Coorosity yourself, Hommy Beg! How dare you be comin' in the house callin' names to him—jus' you set down to your own work, an' leave me to mine. [Hommy shrugs his shoulders and settles himself cross-legged on table with work.] Coorosity, indeed! As if childher was like them big dolls that can only squeak when you pinch them.

Gradually subsides, quiets child, tucks him up again, and taking shawl from peg, prepares to go out.

Mrs Gale: I think he'll be quate now for awhile. Will you cast an eye on him Hommy, an' I'll jus' slip roun' to Radcliffe's to see can I get some goose-grease. P'raps the neck is sore at him with all the cryin' he's doin'. Cast an eye, Hommy; cast an eye.

Goes out at door.

Hommy [begins to thread needle, etc.]: Well I never saw the like of these wans fir wearin' their clothes. Childher now you don't wonder at. They're like moths fir their clothes. But these wans is well off an' no need to be wearin' such oul duds.

Slowly begins to sew, humming a tune.

Child [sitting up suddenly]: Drop that, Hommy Beg!

Hommy [starts with surprise and then looks over spectacles quite scandalized]:
Well, if ever—

Child: Drop it now. [Jumps out of cradle scattering shawls and wraps, Hommy gazing open-mouthed.] Smart now, Hommy—clear this place quick. [Picks up besom and pokes Hommy, finally chasing him into corner, and picking up fiddle in its green bag thrusts it at him.] Now then, tune up! Quick now—give us a quickstep.

“Bollan bane,” or “Tune of wheeyl vooar.”
Child dances, throwing things at Hommy, and hitting him with besom; till at last Hommy gets up on table again, playing faster and faster.

Hommy [stopping suddenly]: Whisht! Whisht! Here’s Herself comin’—thank my stars! What in ever will she say!

Child creeps into cradle, drawing shawls and rugs over himself, and begins whining and moaning. Hommy tries clumsily to get down from table.

Mrs Gale [standing at door with hands uplifted]: What in all the world is the meaning of this?

Hommy [shamefacedly]: Aw, thryin’ to amuse the poor lil falla I was. Makin’ him laugh too, the clavier I was doin’ it. An’ jus’ hear how he’s frettin’ again now I’ve stopped. [Stands looking at Mrs Gale, rubbing his chin.] I’m thinkin’—

Mrs Gale [interrupting]: Well, don’t be thinkin’ then, but for goodness sake put a stitch on them duds.

Hommy: Well, but I’m sayin’—

Mrs Gale: Will you take an’ be doin’ your work, an’ lave thinkin’ an’ sayin’ to them as is eddicated according.

Takes basin from chiollagh, to feed child.

Hommy [despairingly]: Hou! on, woman! Hou! on there for a minute now!

Mrs Gale: An’ what for am I to hou! on, an’ the chile needin’ his mate?

Hommy [impressively]: Mrs Gale, yondher falla is not no right wan at all.

Mrs Gale: Aw, the dear me, Hommy! What do you mean?

Hommy: Whist, now. Come you over here that he'll not be hearin'—

Mrs Gale: Deed I think it's asleep he is.

Hommy: It's not sleep that's doin' on that falla. Boul as an athag he is, an' wide awake as a gander. Lizzen here now. Up at the Cronk where I was rarin' to there was just such another, the very marra of this wan, an' it was my own Grandmother proved it on them, the way I'll be doin' for you now.

Mrs Gale: Aw Hommy, I'm not goin' to have the chile hurted—

Hommy: Who's goin' to hurt him? If he is what I'm thinkin' he won't wait to be hurted, an' them wans won't let him be hurted either.

Mrs Gale: Well now, I have been thinkin' times there was something quare in him too. Would it be the evil eye that was goin' a puttin' on him, or was he butched, or what—. But do you think, Hommy, that themselves have been playing a thrick on me?

Hommy: You do as I tell you, Mrs Gale, an' you will be thankin' Hommy gran' when you've your own lil falla back again.

Mrs Gale [hesitating]: Well as long as you won't be hurtin' him for fear you're makin' a mistake—. What is it then I am to do Hommy man?

Hommy: You are to go out to the haggart an' bring in a passel of turves, if you plase, an' I'll watch him.

Mrs Gale goes out, looking first at child in cradle and then suspiciously at Hommy. Child yells.

Hommy [going to cradle and rocking]:

Sleep, boy, sleep,
 Dhrame, boy, dhrame;
 The King can only ate his mate,
 An' I can do the same.
 Hush, boy, hush,
 Hushie, bowie, bow,
 Rixum, raxum, pring, prash,
 Hushie, bowie, bow,

Sleep, boy, sleep,
 Dhrame, boy, dhrame;
 The cat is in the counting-house.
 Hush, boy, hush,
 Hushie, bowie, bow,
 Rixum, raxum, pring, prash,
 Cock-a-lory now.

I think it's asleep he is at last, but I wouldn't thruss his weather eye is open for all. Let's have a look. [Bends over cradle. Child turns over and flings his fist in Hommy's face.] Ogh, murther! Is that the way he's sleepin'. I'll have to put a rale charm on him for all.

Mrs Gale returns with turves in her apron. Hommy takes them from her and packs them on fire. Mrs Gale watches uneasily. Hommy takes the bellows.

Hommy: Now sit you down there with your back to him, an' take you that waistcut an' stitch for your life. An' whatever you do don't look round or you'll be murdered with fright.

Hommy blows turves. Child rises up, wringing his hands and begins to wail and roar; then getting out of cradle, sings:—

Roie, roie, roie shoh, ta mee yllagh,
 Lossaghyn, lossaghyn, ta mee gred.

Enter Witches, with besoms. Chorus:—

Butcheragh, butcheragh,
 Skeab orroo!
 Boir ad, stroie ad,
 Skeab orroo!

Child:

Ogh hogh, tar da'n bogh,
 Caillyn croutagh.
 Cur yn sleih dourin treih,
 Skeab orroo!

Chorus—Butcheragh, &c.

Child:

Unnysup gow ad.

Omnes:

Unnysup yiw ad.
 Pishaghyn, guinaghyn vermayd sleih.
 Chorus—Butcheragh, &c.

All gallop off on their broomsticks, child leading, and singing butcheragh, etc.

Mrs Gale: Aw Hommy, Hommy, what's doin' in at all?

Keeps her face hidden.

Hommy [standing up and rubbing himself]: Aw, butcheragh thremenjus. Did you hear them screechin', Mrs Gale?

Mrs Gale: I hard some sort of hullabalooin', but I was too freckened to listen. Were they speakin' bad to us, Hommy?

Hommy: Aw scandalous. English wouldn't do reachin' for them, but heavin' the Gaelic at us as hard as they could.

Mrs Gale: Wheer's the chile, Hommy?

Hommy: The chile you're callin' him. He's a thousan' years is that falla if he's a day. Wasn't he leadin' the whole gang ridin' his besom as if it was a pony, an' the whole of them banging poor Hommy most unmarciful. You'll do all right, but it's me they'll be after! 'Deed I'm not feelin' so well this minute.

Sits down holding his head.

Mrs Gale: Wheer's the chile, Hommy Beg. Come urrov that an' tell me wheer's the chile!

Hommy: Amn't I tellin' you! Ridin' his besom at the height of his glory and screetchin' worse nor any of them.

Mrs Gale: I'll have the law on you, Hommy, if you don't fetch the chile back middlin' quick.

Hommy: Chut, chut, woman; they're over the Deemster's chimleys by this time, an' judge nor jury won't fetch them back.

Mrs Gale: I'll have the law on you, Hommy, an' not wait for no judge an' jury. Go on now, an' don't stand glommerin' theer, but fetch him back this minute.

Chases him with the tongs. Hommy makes for door, Mrs Gale holding on to his jacket and belabouring with the tongs. Hommy stops suddenly.

Hommy: Houl on, woman! Houl on! They're not done with us yet. I hear somethin' breathin' at the key-hole.

Elfin music heard.

Hommy [in a low voice]: Go an' sit down again now, an' turn your back; for if they're thinkin' you're watchin', they'll spoil all an' change him into a passel of cabbage-bons as like as not.

Mrs Gale goes to her corner, turning her back on door, but sitting up alert, and listening eagerly. Hommy lays tongs across the end of the cradle, covering them out of sight with a rug, and then hides in the chiollagh.

Good Fairies enter with Babe singing:—

Ushag veg veen we bring you home,
We bring you home, we bring you home;
Happy and gay, we must away,
Away, away, away.

(They dance with babe).

Ushag veg veen, we leave goodbye,
We leave goodbye, we leave goodbye,
Into your dreams we'll steal and play,
And play, and play, and play.

(They dance with babe, and put him in cradle).

Ushag veg veen, we kiss our hands,
We kiss our hands, we kiss our hands;
Away we fly, and bid good-bye,
Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye.

(They fly out, kissing their hands). Mrs Gale looks round. Babe holds out hands to her.

Mrs Gale: Aw, Hommy, come urrov that this minute. See the lil darlin' that's here. Look at him, the way the goose-grease has relieved him. Mammy's own lil darlin' lov' again, smilin' an' jumpin'—an' you standin' theer like a big gomag and hardly a stitch set in them waistcoats yet. [Hommy climbs slowly on to table seating himself cross-legged and threading his needle again.] For goodness sake set to and start now, or if Himself comes in soon there wont be no dinner for lazy wans! [To Babe]: Ushag veg veen it is then, the darlin' millish veen!

CURTAIN.



Hollantide,

OR

Jem's Mother.

SCENE.—A parlour with table set for tea. Fireplace at side opposite door. Candles, photographs, etc., on shelf. A sofa or settee on which lies a new hat. Lamp burning. Mrs Fayle and Lizzie talking earnestly.

Mrs F.: So that's the way it is, Lizzie veen, an' I have not felt so cheered this long time as I am to-night. There's something seems to have been goin' beside me all day long whisperin': "He will come back; he will come back"; an' I believe well it is this everin' itself that he will come. Have you got the Book there, Lizzie?

Lizzie: Yes, sure; an' the key of the house door to put in it. We'll try it again, Mrs Fayle, before anyone comes in.

Mrs F.: Yes, chile, yes; try it now careful an' serious. Three times have it opened at the same place 'this week when we have been together, an' I believe it an' all is tellin' us for to hope.

Lizzie fetches old Manx Bible, dusts it reverently, and lays it on table. With Mrs Fayle's hand over her eyes, she opens the Book at random, slips key in, and closes it again. They stand a moment looking at each other.

Mrs F.: Now, Lizzie, open quick an' see what words the head of the key is touchin'.

Lizzie opens Book half fearfully; Mrs Fayle watching, with hands pressed over her heart.

Mrs F. [in a low strained voice]: Well, what's it sayin'?

Lizzie: Aw, look at that now/ Here's them very words again: "Joy cometh in the morning." [Putting Book aside and key in her pocket.] What better could it say for us. I believe in my heart we will see him this night itself! Sit you down now, Mrs Fayle, an' I'll make a drop of tea to calm you. An' you wont take it too much to heart if after all we still have to wait an' hope.

Mrs F. [wiping her eyes and sitting down]: No, no, Lizzie veen. Whatever comes we mus' take off it. I will be patient too. It's only you an' me, Lizzie, that's got any hope at all, but look how strong the feeling is in the both of us? The people is all tellin' me for to give up hoping, an' they're saying that you should be giving him up too; but after all, Lizzie veen, what's our Jem to all them wans? It's to us, who love him, the signs come.

Lizzie: It is so, Mrs Fayle, an' I was wanting to tell you that I, too, have been so uplifted in my heart all this day that I was just coming over to see you.

Mrs F: There's always signs in for those that will be looking for them. Think now of Jem's old Mona bringing in a piece of iron in her mouth this morning. They say it's terrible lucky to find a piece of old iron unexpected, an' what for would Mona bring such a thing in her mouth to me? Not a piece of a stick as she does many a morning, nor even a stone for me to throw for her, the crathur, but a piece of coul iron as thick as your wriss an' heavy, too, in her jaws. Well come then, Lizzie. I only looked in to see would you come with me.

Lizzie: Yes, I will; but I wont be able to stay, for I've the milking to do yet, an' there's two or three little kiartlins wantin' doing in the dairy, too. [She takes sun-bonnet from peg and puts it on. They go out together. Hoptunaa boys heard in the distance as door opens.]

Same scene. Door opens and enter Kirry.

Kirry [looking around]: Are you in, Lizzie? [Coming into room, calls again and knocks on floor.] Are you theer, Lizzie? Aw, well now, an' me come all the way from Lhergy Rennie to be disappointed like this. [Lifts cosy from tea-pot.] Tea made, too, so she can't be far. Gone over the road to see Jem's mother, it's like. Them two is thick thremenjus they'rs sayin'—the both of them sartain sure the poor falla will come home again. [Looks at cakes on hearth, tries one, finishes it, then another.] These is good, though. I'm hungry, too. What's keepin' her at all? [Takes a chair and sits down.] I may as well be takin' res for all, for I'm tired scandalous walking about the town an' houlin' on to the parcels. You'd think the people was made of elbows the way they're knockin' up against you when you're thryin' to have a look in at the shop windows. It's terribly lonely, too, among such a sight of people. Well Lizzie is better off than me, for she have got a memory anyway. [Taking picture from shelf and looking wistfully at it, holding it out to the light.] Isn't that the very marra of Jem! What's this readin' below—middlin' small writin', too. [Reads slowly and laboriously]: "'Tis batther to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all.'" Well that's nice readin', too. I wonder did Jem send her that in a latther one time? Dear me, it's time I was lookin' roun', too, or I'll be goin' a leavin' worse nor Lizzie; but the men's sceerce thremenjus — an' middlin' shy, too, they're sayin'. [Walks about restlessly, sees hat lying on settle, picks it up and turns it round admiringly in her hand.] Aw, see that now. She've been thrimin' a new hat for Sunday. Tossed up middlin' stylish at her, too! Well, now, is the girl making out that he really will come home an' not lost at all, as they said he was? [Tries on hat.] I would like to look in the glass now to see does it suit me. Hollantide an' all, when they're sayin' the man you're

to have will come and look over your shoulder in the glass. Still an' for all it's middlin' serious thryin' them things. I don't know have I got the nerve! But it's early yet, an' besides there'll not be no ill-wans goin' about to-night when all Them Others is goin' through the world. I'll thry it anyhow.

Goes up to mirror and looks at herself smilingly, admiring the hat. Enter Bobby, who, seeing Kirry, tip-toes towards her and grins over her shoulder in the glass. Kirry turns round with a shriek, and hits him smartly.

Kirry: You young limb! How dare you be doin' imperence upon me like that. I'll tell your Daa as sure's you're livin'. What do you want comin' in other people's houses when they're out and terrifying the people!

Bobby: What do you want, Kirry Cregreen—comin' in other people's houses when they're out,—an' eatin' other people's cakes?

Kirry: Don't you be givin' me none of your sauce now.

Tries to catch and slap him. Bobby escapes each time, grinning and jeering.

Bobby: Who ate the cakes, Kirry?

Kirry: How dare you say I ate the cakes.

Bobby: I didn't say you ate the cakes, now!

Kirry: Then how dare you say I touched the cakes!

Bobby: I didn't see you touch the cakes; I only guessed it because you were so mad. I don't spy on other people through the windows—an' I don't go for to thry on other people's new hats either.

Kirry: Bobby, darlin', be quate now. I only took wan lil teeney wan jus' to see were they keepin' hot for Lizzie. Don't tell on me an' I'll give you a sweetie when I'm down on Sunday. [Puts cover over cakes.]

Bobby: Conversation lozenges, Kirry?

Kirry: Yes, sure; lozengers with red an' yaller pothry an' conundrums.

Bobby: Are you keepin' the hat hot for Lizzie, too, Kirry?

Kirry: Aw, the sakes. [Pulling off hat in confusion.] You may as well be goin' now, Bobby.

Bobby: Give me wan of them lil cakes, Kirry, an' I'll not tell.

Kirry: Aw, Bobby, I don't like for fear she'll come in. Well, jus' wan then. [Bobby eats and holds out his hand for more.] Well there's two now. [He tries to snatch plate.] That's enough, now. Give over then—you'll have them on the flure all in a minute—there now, look at that! [Plate falls and cakes are scattered.] An' the plate broke an' all. [Wringing her hands.] Now what'll we do!

Bobby [cheerfully, picking up cakes and stuffing them into his mouth with delight]: We mus' finish them now, Kirry, for they're terrible untidy on the flure like that. Leave the pieces of the plate an' she'll think they've been took at the cat. Quick now; here she's comin'.

Kirry: Don't you be tellin' no crimes on me now, Bobby, an' I'll tell none on you. Mind you now!

Door opens and Lizzie comes in.

Lizzie: Oh, Kirry, have you come down to see me, an' me gone out. Sit down for all, 'an we'll have some tea. Well Bobby, boy, were you wanting me?

Bobby: I was jus' bringin' back vonder lil iron you lent Daa; there it is on the fender. [Sidles slowly towards door.]

Kirry: I was in the town, Lizzie, fetchin' a few erran's, an' I thought I would give a look in to see you.

Lizzie: Right too, an' I'm pleased shockin' to see you. Sit down, sit down. I had just slipped out with Mrs Fayle for a few minutes, and I wet the tea before I went out, so it's ready. [Catching sight of broken plate on hearth.] Losh save us, what's this at all!

Kirry [looking warningly at Bobby]: It will be the cat, it's like, that's been doin' havock on the table.

Lizzie: But there's no cat in now—not since poor pussy-bogh was stole.

Kirry: There's plenty strange cats goin' roun' on the houses though at this time of year.

Bobby: Deed Lizzie an' I saw a cat in this very house—an' a fine big wan she was too—an' long claws on her——

Kirry: Is that Bobby's Daa callin'? [Listening at door and shaking her fist at him behind Lizzie's back.] You'll catch it, Bobby, if you don't run.

Bobby [going slowly]: Cats is middlin' inquisitive, too. I seen that wan goin' in an' she was lookin' at herself in the glass——

Kirry: If you don't hurry, I'll go bail your Daa will give it you, for he was complainin' of you to a parcel of us in the street only this very everin'.

Bobby [going]: She had her claws on the hat yondhar, too, thinkin' them wings was chickens, it's like! Miaow! [Exit.]

Kirry: Them boys has th' imperince of sin at them.

Lizzie: Aw, poor Bobby for all. There's no harm in the chile, an' no mother to be steerin' him either. Well come now to the table, Kirry, an' make yourself at home.

Pours out tea; the girls take their tea chatting quietly. Kirry empties her cup into saucer to study the grounds. Lizzie comes round and looks carefully at it with her.

Kirry: Are you seein' anything, Lizzie?

Lizzie: I'm not so good as some for seein'. Still an' for all, Kirry—look there—isn't that a sign of some one comin' for you? Fair, isn't he? an' middlin' tall an' talkin' the Baarle very stylish——

Kirry [snatching the saucer and looking]: Dear me, Lizzie, how are you seein' so clavver? Listen here now. I've brought an apple in my bag to see what will we make of the parings. Give me

a knife now, Lizzie, an' stan' you back theer and watch. You mus'n't speak wan word, for you don't know who mite be hearin'. Turn the lamp down now an' be quate.

Sits down and slowly peels apple in one piece. Throws the peel over her shoulder, and waits while Lizzie looks carefully at the peel on the floor.

Lizzie [slowly]: Well now, I wouldn't thruss but it's—

Kirry: Yes, yes! What gel?

Lizzie: Is it—a double-u?

Kirry: Yes, sure! Why not?

Lizzie: Or perhaps it might be—M.

Kirry [sharply]: Aw no, not at all. Give another look, Lizzie, an' maybe if you gave it a lil shove with the poker—

Lizzie: No, no, that wouldn't do at all. W, it is, though, as sure's you're theer.

Kirry: That's good now [looking pleased]. W. might stand for—well for—a name like Watterson, mightn't it? Still an' for all there's no sayin'! [Wistfully]: Well now, surely he'll come forward an' make up his mind soon now—but the mother is coorse terrible an' detarmined he's not to get married—she's not wantin' no gels about—shoooin' them away as if they was—

Bobby [at door]: Cats!

Kirry [rushing at him]: Are you there again, you young torment!

Bobby dodges, and goes to Lizzie.

Lizzie: Well, Bobby, what's doin' on you now?

Bobby: Lizzie, there's a Mr Watterson in at our place. [Kirry looks interested.] An' he was askin' if Miss Cregeen was gone home from the town yet—

Kirry: Dear me, Bobby darlin', an' what did you say?

Bobby [to Lizzie]: I toul him I thought Miss Cregeen was gone home this hour since.

Kirry: You didn't! How dare you, Bobby, go for to say such a thing.

Bobby [to Lizzie]: How would I be knowin'? It was Daa toul him she might be here, an' sent me to see, as Mr Watterson would be willin' to offer her a lift home—if the car would be empty at him.

Lizzie: Was that about the car being empty put in your message, Bobby?

Kirry: I'll be boun' it wasn't. Look here, Bobby darlin'—

Bobby: My word, isn't she gettin' tandhar with her "Bobby darlin'"! A lil bit ago it was "Bobby, you limb," or "Bobby, you scum of the earth."

Kirry: Be quate now an' listen. Tell you Mr Watterson where I am, an' maybe Lizzie will be askin' him to come in an' see her.

Lizzie: Yes, sure—though it's a poor place for him to be comin' in. [Takes apron and dusts chair, sets a clean cup on table, etc.] Tell him to come, an' welcome.

Bobby: Aw well, he'll be a quile yet, for he was gettin' a shoe put on that classy mare he drives, an' he an' Daa was havin' a cooish an' a smook at our house wheer there's no women-folk to be scutchin' roun' an' puttin' things away, an' talkin' so foolish that no one can get a word in.

Kirry: Go quick now, Bobby, that's a lamb.

Bobby: Lamb now, is it? My stars it will be "my lil cherubim" soon—queers them wings of Lizzies that I'll put them on before the glass to see will they suit me?

Kirry: Give over now, or I'll suit you with a pair of goose-wings. Go on now an' tell him quickly for [to Lizzie] there'll be a power of people on the road to-night, an' some of these wans is so boul they would be askin' him to give them a lif' whether he would or no.

Lizzie: Go on now, Bobby, an' here's a penny for you.

Bobby: Thank you, Lizzie; you've always got a kind word for a poor man——

Kirry: Man!

Bobby: Or a pussy cat [going as Kirry pretends to chase him.] Poor pussy-bogh! Miaow! [Exit.]

Kirry: Now, Lizzie, what was I tellin' you? M. indeed! No indeed. W. is a far more stylisher latther. Is my skirt right, Lizzie? [Turns round, arranges her blouse, etc.]

Lizzie: Who Watterson will he be, Kirry? Yes, sure, your skirt is right enough. You've a way with you that makes all your things look right, Kirry. Sit down again an' let me put your hair nice, too. These fash'nable hats is terrible crushin' for the hair. [Kirry sits tapping her foot restlessly; Lizzie pulls and puffs out her hair.] Who Watterson, I was sayin', Kirry?

Kirry: His people was from Crosby, I believe, but he was goin' a rarin' in the Colonies somewheer—Australia or Van Dieman's Land, or some of these places, an' came in to a nice bit of money they're sayin'. Any way he bought the Lherghy Glass jus' alongside of our place, an' has been livin' there with his mother this six months or more.

Lizzie [stepping back to look at effect]: Now go and look at yourself in the glass, Kirry veen.

Kirry [looking at herself well-pleased, then turning back to Lizzie]: There's another apple in the bag there, Lizzie. Are you goin' to have a try for yourself?

Lizzie: No, no, I'm not. There's only wan letter in the alphabet that I would be seein' however the peel might fall, an' I never want to see another.

Kirry: It's like poor Jem will never come back now, Lizzie bogh, an' the people is all sayin' it's a pity you should be spendin' the time waitin' for him still.

Lizzie [quietly]: He will come back yet, Kirry. His mother is sure he will, an' so am I.

Kirry: The both of you is obstinate terrible, an' th' ould woman is detarmined too. I don't know indeed what makes you both take such a notion, with the name on the list an' the story toul in the papers an' all.

Lizzie: Well, Kirry, look at the good boy Jem always was to his mother—never leaving her an' hour without tellin' her where he was going, that she would not be onaisy—an' if anything had come on him, wouldn't he have come back for to tell her?

Kirry: Well, Lizzie, you may be right. They're sayin' there's never a day passes but she's goin' wanderin' along the roads at the beginning of the night to see will she meet him.

Lizzie: She do so. Every night, wet or dry, an' I'm goin' after her times to meet her an' bring her home, for she is not noticin how the time passes, an' if she has been out only ten minutes you can easy satisfy her that the night is near over, an' persuade her to come back an' put the kettle on for him. An' then we're persuadin' her to take a lil lie down, an' that way we're gettin' her to sleep through the night.

A low knock heard.

Kirry: That'll be her now it's like.

Lizzie goes out and returns with Mrs Fayle, who puts her hand over her eyes, dazed with the light.

Lizzie: Come in, Mrs Fayle. You'll remember Kirry Cregeen that used to be livin' down here?

Mrs Fayle gives a little old-fashioned curtsey, with her white handkerchief folded in her hand.

Mrs F.: Yes, sure, an' how are you keepin' Miss Cregeen?

Kirry: Nicely, thank you, Mrs Fayle, an' how's yourself this long time?

Mrs F.: Well enough, well enough, thank you, an' I'm not mindin' the coul an' I'm not mindin' the heat, for when we're wonderin' in the mornin'—will he come this everin'—an' in th' everin'—will he come in th' mornin'—the days

is much alike. Are you ready, Lizzie veen?

Lizzie: Aw, sit a lil while Mrs Fayle, dear. Sure Kirry here is tired, for she's had a long thramp from Lherghy Rennie over. Stop an' take ress for a bit now, an' then we'll take her a piece of the road home on our way to meet Jem.

Kirry [hastily]: Never mind me at all. I'll do all right an' wait here by the fire a bit.

Mrs F.: Well, well girls. Don't let me be hinderin', but you wont keep me too long, will you? [Sitting down and following Lizzie about with her eyes, as she sets a cup of tea before her, then stirring it absently and looking at Kirry.] You see, Miss Cregeen, we are thinkin' my son Jem may come home any time now—this very night he may.

Lizzie takes milkcan and goes out.

Kirry: Yes, sure, so Lizzie was tellin' me. [A pause.] But they're sayin' the ship an' all was lost, Mrs Fayle.

Mrs F.: An' if she was lost, the crathur, there was men saved in the boats.

Kirry [sadly]: There was men lost too, Mrs Fayle.

Mrs F.: Aye, the sowles! But look at our Jem the boy he was. No wather in the sea could drown him, an' wouldn't he be certain to be picked up at last?

Kirry: He might, too. P'raps by some outlandish crew that was goin' foreign, an' be taken roun' the worl' with them. Or he might have lost his memory as some of them does.

Mrs F.: No, no, our Jem had the memory of a horse.

Kirry: But he might have been ill in his mind, too, an' the memory gone at him. So there's no sayin'—he may come yet for all. Still he's been gone a long time now, Mrs Fayle.

Mrs F.: Over a year now—but I'm not losin' heart—no, no. Listen here now, an' I will tell you somethin'. At Hollantide night last year I was out there at th' oul Cabbal in the little everin', an' I was seein' all the people that was

passin' from the earth—thousan's of them, oul an' young, an' lil childher, an' the great hosts of warriors an' haroes that were sweepin' from the gray coul sea in the Nor's to the warm blue oceans of the Sou's. An' every wan as they passed turned and looked at me, an' my Jem was not among them. This night again have I seen them—thousan's an' thousan's of them with their sores an' their sins cleansed an' healed with the terrible pains they had borne—an' I tell you they all turned an' looked at me, but my Jem was not among them. [Breaks down exhausted.]

Kirry [gently laying a hand on her]: May God bring him safe home to you after all!

Mrs F. [rising]: No fear, no fear. But I must be goin' home now just to see is all ready for him an' tell our oul man to put an' air of fire in the parlour for him, for the night is coul.

Kirry goes out with her to the door. Returns and begins siding the tea things, thoughtfully. Knock heard. Kirry looks up. Enter Watterson.

Kirry: Good everin', Mr Watterson. You will be wantin' to see Miss Lace, no doubt. She's gone out, but she'll be in just now, if it wouldn't be askin' too much for you to sit down and wait a lil while.

Watterson: Well, it is nice to find you by yourself for once.

Kirry: Aw, well now. Was it me you were wantin' for anything? I'm afraid I must not stay now. P'raps you can be givin' a sight in at our place to-morrow when I'll be at home.

Hurriedly making for her parcels. Watterson tries to take them from her. Parcels are spilled, and picked up with laughter and confusion.

Watterson: As I was saying, it is nice to find you by yourself, for there is generally such a pack around you, and you are so busy that you never have time for a word with a poor fellow like me.

Kirry: Aw, now, don't be makin' fun of me. Surely you wouldn't have me always dandherin' roun' with a pothry book.

Watterson: Not much fear—for what with the cows an' the children, and the goats and the hens and the meg-lambs, I never get the chance for a word. Well, now, what I came to ask was, would you drive home with me this evening?

Kirry [shyly]: Aw, well now, thank you very kindly for askin' me; it will be a real treat, instead of the long walk with all them weary parcels.

Enter Lizzie. Hoptunaa Boys heard as door opens.

Lizzie: Here's the Hoptunaa Boys—Bobby an' all. Oh, is this your friend, Kirry? He's kindly welcome.

Shakes hands with Watterson. Hoptunaa Boys come in with their cabbage-bons in their hands, and sing their stave in Manx. Lizzie gives them "pieces," and they go out, singing.

Lizzie [calling after them]: Good-night, boys. [To Watterson]: I must ask you to excuse me now, as I promised to go to Mrs Fayle, but sit down an' make yourselves at home, an' I'll be back again presently. [Exit.]

Kirry: Deed it's time I was takin' the road home, too.

Rising, and beginning to pin on hat.

Watterson: What's your hurry, Miss Cregeen? I was just thinking how nice it was to be sitting by the fire with a nice girl looking as if she was the mistress of the house.

Kirry [lays her hat down and pokes fire]: Well, you see I promised our wans that we'd bake the soddag valloo to-night.

Watterson: What's that at all, Miss Cregeen?

Kirry: Are you Manx an' navver heard of the soddag valloo—the dumb-cake?

Watterson: Manx I am—though my father was a Scotchman. But you see I was rared in the Colonies, and mother is not one to be talking of things much.

Kirry: Well, you see the soddag valloo is a surt of a bonag they're makin' at Hollantide of flour an' wather, an' it's goin' a bakin' on the hearth. Then each of the girls must take a piece an' eat it walkin' backwards to her bed, navver sayin' wan word.

Watterson: What then, Kirry?

Kirry: Kirry sounds pretty, the saf' way you say it; but still an' for all I don't know that you have any right to be callin' it to me.

Watterson: Right enough, Kirry; an' us such near neighbours. Dear me the time we have together is far too short to be going all the length of "Miss Cregeen" all the time.

Kirry: Your mother might be blamin' me if it come to her ears that you were callin' me Kirry.

Watterson. No fear—what is it Bobby's father says—she'll get lave. Well, what happens then, Kirry, when the pieces are all eaten?

Kirry: Why, they dream, of course, of—well—of somebody.

Watterson: Oh, is it just somebody? Dear me, I could dream of somebody easy enough without any soddag valloo. Isn't it some particular somebody, Kirry veen?

Kirry: Well they're sayin'—but I'm not mindin' such capers—but they're sayin' —. Aw, listen! listen! [getting up hastily and going to door. Voices and talking heard.] That's Jem Fayle's voice, as sure as I am standin' here, an' Lizzie an' his mother with him. They've brought him back for all!

Enter Jem with his Mother and Lizzie. Jem and his Mother hand in hand, facing the audience.

Kirry: Well, Jem! Is it yourself that's in after all?

Jem: Aye, aye, myself it is an' no other that I know of! My word how homely it was to hear the Hoptunaa Boys as I came over the hill. [Lizzie brings chair forward and girls place Mrs Fayle in it.] That's right, girls. Let her

sit a bit an' then we'll be takin' the road home to Daa an' the rest. [To Mrs Fayle]: You'll be all right now, Mammy, an' you'll be takin' resse these coul nights, sittin' by the fire with your bit of knittin', an Daa with his pipe on the other side, all comfortable.

Kirry: It's like Jem will be stoppin' home now?

Mrs F.: Yess, yes; I hope well he will, for Daa an' me is gettin' up in years now, an' he will be able to take the mill off our hands. You'll be fine an' glad to settle down, wont you, Jem boy?

Jem: I will so. But not just yet Mammy, for there's work to be done first, an' there's the boys out yonder callin' for help to do it. An' there's Mothers an' Sweethearts waitin' for them to come home, too,—the way you an' Lizzie have been waitin' for me. [Looking round.] Where is my girl now? [drawing Lizzie forward.] I'll tell you what we'll do Mammy. Lizzie an' me will get married at once now, an' then you'll be havin' your home together, an' you'll keep each other in heart talkin' of the boy that came back when he was lost, an' will come back with other Mother's boys when the war is over.

Mrs F.: Well, well boy! I've got you safe now for a bit anyway, an' if it's your duty will be callin' you away again, it was for to do your duty that I rared you, so I'm not losin' heart, no, no! An' as for Lizzie here, if I was to walk the world over—from the Calf to the Point of Ayre—I would not find a sweeter nor a more faithfuller daughter than the girl my Jem has chose for to be his wife.



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